

**Amendments to the Specification:**

Please replace paragraph [0006] with the following new paragraph:

[0006] In systemic inflammations, as in the case of a sepsis or of septic shock, the inflammation specific reaction cascades spread in an uncontrolled manner over the whole body and become life-threatening in the sense of an excessive immune response. Regarding the present knowledge about the occurrence and the possible role of individual groups of endogenous inflammation-specific substances, reference is made, for example, to A. Beishuizen et al., “Endogenous Mediators in Sepsis and Septic Shock”, *Advances in Clinical Chemistry*, vol. 33, 1999, 55-131; and C. Gabay et al., “Acute Phase Proteins and Other Systemic Responses to Inflammation”, *The New England Journal of Medicine*, vol. 340, no. 6, 1999, 448-454. Since the understanding of sepsis, and hence also the recognised definitions, have changed in recent years, reference is also made to K. Reinhart et al., “Sepsis und septischer Schock” [Sepsis and septic shock], in: *Intensivmedizin*, Georg Thieme Verlag, Stuttgart, New York, 2001, 756-760, where a modern definition of the term sepsis is given. Regarding the importance of the clinical picture of “severe sepsis”, reference is furthermore made to (34; in this description, numbers in brackets refer to the references which appear under the same number in the list of references at the end of the description). A more recent summary of the criteria and definitions for a sepsis and closely related clinical pictures are to be found under ~~<http://www.talessin.de/scripte/medizin/sepsis1.html>~~ at url [talessin.de/scripte/medezin/sepsis1.html](http://www.talessin.de/scripte/medezin/sepsis1.html). In the present Application, the term sepsis is used in a comprehensive sense based on the definitions as they appear in said publications for septic clinical pictures of severely ill patients in intensive care units.

Please replace paragraph [0018] with the following new paragraph:

[0018] Superoxide dismutases (SOD, EC 1.15.1.1) are enzymes having an antioxidant function which are capable of converting the reactive superoxide anion  $O_2^-$  into less reactive species. Eukaryotic cells contain two different SOD types, namely Cu/Zn SOD (also known as SOD-1) and Mn SOD. Human Cu/Zn SOD is primarily found in cytosol. Cu/Zn is a dimer consisting of

two identical subunits and having a molar mass of about 33 kDa. Human Mn SOD (SOD-2), which is found in particular in the mitochondria, is a homotetramer and has a molar mass of about 80 kDa. In addition, a so-called extra cellular SOD or EC-SOD, which occurs inter alia in extra cellular fluids, such as plasma, lymph and synovial fluid, was also identified. The cDNA or amino acid sequences of all three abovementioned SOD types are known (cf. for example (27), (28), (29)) and differ considerably. They can be found in relevant databases (see e.g. [http://www.expasy.org/cgi-bin-niceprot](http://www.expasy.org/cgi-bin/niceprot) url [expasy.org/cgi-bin-niceprot](http://www.expasy.org/cgi-bin-niceprot)) (Cu/Zn SOD or SOD1: Swiss-Prot Accession Number: P00441; Mn SOD or SOD2: Swiss-Prot Accession Number: P04179; extra cellular SOD or EC-SOD or SOD3; Swiss-Prot Accession Number: P08294). When only the abbreviation SOD is used in the following description, no distinction is made between the individual SOD types, i.e. the discussion is as a rule about findings and information where the enzymatic action is of primary importance.

Please replace paragraph [0028] with the following new paragraph:

[0028] Accordingly, the present invention relates, ~~as claimed in claim 1,~~ to a method for the early determination of the risk of mortality of patients in intensive care units and emergency care units, in which the concentration of Cu/Zn superoxide dismutase (Cu/Zn SOD or SOD-1) is determined selectively in a serum or plasma sample of such a patient and – quantitatively or semi-quantitatively – measured concentrations which are above a predetermined cut-off are correlated with a high risk of mortality (a low probability of survival).

Please delete paragraph [0029].

Following current paragraph [0030], please insert the heading: “Brief Description of the Drawings.”

Following current paragraph [0007], please insert the heading: “Summary of the Invention.”